CITIES AND COMMUNITIES:
Cultural Indicators at the Local Level

Workshop Report   November 27, 2006

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Workshop Report

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The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Creative City Network of Canada, the Department of Canadian Heritage, or Infrastructure Canada.

Cities and Communities: Cultural Indicators at the Local Level

WORKSHOP REPORT – Executive summary

In the context of a growing number of active initiatives related to cultural indicator development in Canada, a full-day workshop on "Cities and Communities: Cultural Indicators at the Local Level" was held in Ottawa on November 27, 2006. The workshop brought together many individuals and organizations actively working in this area to discuss their experiences and plans, and to address shared challenges including methodological, content-related, and use-context issues. This report synthesizes the proceedings of the workshop and its associated reference materials.

The workshop aimed to identify and share methodological frameworks and guidelines that would be useful to the process of developing cultural indicators; to better understand content and research issues; and to learn more about the practical uses of cultural indicators at the local level.

Three frameworks are currently used to conceptually frame cultural indicator development: sustainability, quality of life, and societal communications. At the local level, community *sustainability* and *quality of life* resonated most. These fields have developed a range of methodological frameworks (including process guidelines, indicator selection/development criteria, and critical issues), which are valuable to informing cultural indicator development.

The workshop collectively identified important subject areas for local cultural indicators, which created a beginning framework or map for considering, developing, and interpreting cultural indicators at the local level. Two approaches were used: an international scan and synthesis of the indicators used in major cultural indicator projects (Simons & Dang, 2006), which was endorsed by workshop participants; and a separate brainstorming, selection, and dialogue process at the workshop. Both resulting frameworks are presented in this report.

The workshop explored considerations of context and the use of indicators at the local level. The wide range of uses of cultural indicators are grounded in a variety of practical applications and processes. Intra-municipal usability and relevance and the need for appropriate inter-municipal comparability emerged as key areas of concern. A range of practical uses of cultural indicators by local governments and a few examples of uses by other organizations were discussed. Then, based on both research and "use" experiences, a brief compilation of good practices in developing and using cultural indicators at the local level was developed.

Participants also considered the current state of research in this area (capacity and key issues). The multi-stakeholder nature of this evolving field and generally limited capacity/resources highlighted the need for collaborative efforts to move ahead. This necessary approach brings with it research, communication, networking, and resource-sharing challenges, but is the key context in which such efforts must be pursued.

Key issues with the state of knowledge included the availability of real know-how on indicator development, analysis, and interpretation; as well as definition challenges, need for clear conceptual models and connections, and data availability/accessibility.

Recommendations for follow-up from the workshop are presented in two categories: research-related and those aiming to facilitate connections and dialogue. Resources suggested at the workshop or in related research consulted for this project are presented in the Bibliography. Appendices include details of methodological frameworks and guidelines, the workshop agenda, and a list of workshop participants.

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WORKSHOP REPORT**

Introduction

Recognition of the importance of culture in Canadian communities has grown substantially over the last decade. This trend is marked by a rising number of cultural plans and policies, civic committees, and greater consideration of culture among a "continuum of interests in the community."[1] At the same time, other levels of government have acknowledged the importance of local strengths, issues, and dynamics to understanding and addressing broader regional and national issues and goals. This "local turn" has been evident in a number of policy fields, including culture, which increasingly considers the local contexts and issues of cultural development.

Parallel with this broadening interest and recognition of culture is a rising need to develop a set or sets of *cultural indicators* to help guide policy making, to address organizational needs for accountability, and as a key element in the effective delivery of joint initiatives. In general, *indicators* are defined as "bits of information that summarize the characteristics of systems or highlight what is happening in a system," pieces of information that can enable a community to "gauge the general status of a system to inform action" (P. Berry, cited in City of Ottawa, 2003, p. 3). Indicators can illustrate changes in a community over time, be used to help direct investments, show the impacts of investments and policies, and serve as informative input into policy and other decision-making processes. There is a growing realization that indicators should be meaningful at the local level to be most effective. Local-level cultural indicators are valuable to other levels of government for their depth and relevance of analysis, as an aid to understanding different community contexts and to identifying commonalities of issues across communities.

Currently, many municipalities, non-profit organizations, academics, and other levels of government are involved in the development of cultural indicators at a local level. For example, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is beginning development on a suite of indicators on culture as part of its Quality of Life Reporting System (QOLRS). The Community Foundations of Canada developed indicators for various aspects of arts and culture as part of its *Vital Signs* community indicators project, which included five cities in 2006. The Quebec Observatory on Culture and Communications has been working with its municipal advisory group to develop comparable statistics for investments in culture among the 11 largest cities in Quebec. The Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI) aims to develop comparable benchmarks for Ontario municipalities' investments in culture. The United Way of Canada (in partnership with the Tamarack and Caledon Institutes and the National Film Board of Canada) aims to develop neighbourhood-level indicators of vitality and change through its Action for Neighbourhood Change initiative, and include cultural dimensions. The "Mapping Quality of Life and the Culture of Small Cities" CURA project involving Thompson Rivers University (and others) includes municipal, academic, and community partners in a range of small cities. Throughout the country, local governments and community organizations are developing sets of indicators relevant to their cultural plans, policies, and community issues.

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[1] All unattributed quotations are from workshop participants.

Related to this activity, other levels of government have shown an ongoing interest in the development of cultural indicators on a number of fronts, such as exploring the measurability of cultural impacts (social, economic, other) and understanding the process of cultural development in Canadian cities and communities. In developing its policy research strategies, governments require access to and utilize timely, sound, Canadian-based information on the impacts of culture and trends over time.

As part of its networking mandate, the Creative City Network's Centre of Expertise on Culture and Communities has taken on a coordinating role for researchers and others working on cultural indicators by establishing an open listserv (Indicators-L@creativecity.ca) and assembling an online research directory and bibliography (www.creativecity.ca/cecc).[2] In the context of a growing number of active initiatives related to cultural indicator development in Canada, in November 2006 the Centre organized a full-day workshop on "Cities and Communities: Cultural Indicators at the Local Level" in Ottawa. The workshop brought together many of these individuals/organizations to discuss their experiences and plans, and to address shared challenges including:

- The need to develop, at least, an "overlapping consensus" on the content of cultural indicators
- The need to know more about the practical uses of cultural indicators by local government and others in communities
- The need to assess the state of both research and political will in this area

The preparation of this report involved synthesizing workshop presentations, full-group discussions, subgroup discussion reports, recommended background papers (e.g., by Alex Michalos and Benoit Allaire), and comments from selected academics.[3] To support this analysis, a transcript of the day was developed. Presentations, background papers, and edited transcripts are available online: www.creativecity.ca/cecc/events/indicatorwkshp-2006.html

1. Conceptual and methodological frameworks

1.1. Conceptual frameworks

Three frameworks are currently used to conceptually frame cultural indicator development: sustainability, quality of life, and societal communication. At the local level, community *sustainability* and *quality of life* resonated most. From a research perspective, these areas provide a range of rich and complex methodological resources including concepts, principles, guidelines, approaches, and processes. They also serve as explicitly endorsed or implicit reference points for local policy, decisions, and actions; and generally resonate with community residents.

It is an interesting time to be developing cultural indicators within these contexts. The sustainability and quality of life research fields are beginning to consider cultural elements as

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[2] The Centre has also conducted two related research projects: (1) a review of international projects developing indicators for the local level, which served as a background paper for this workshop, and (2) the nature of impact literature relating to cultural infrastructure. The Center of Expertise on Culture and Communities is a project of the Creative City Network of Canada in collaboration with Simon Fraser University.

[3] There has been limited response to the follow-up survey, though those comments received have been rich and thoughtful. Not all comments could be included in this report.

a part of their scope of efforts, while the culture field increasingly needs to be conceptually embedded within broader frameworks and is reaching out to make these connections. Indicator development in these fields is well developed and can provide useful frameworks, experience, and knowledge that can be adopted or adapted to frame the development of cultural indicators.[4]

Also of interest is the list of theoretical principles defining cultural activities as a class of communication activities, which underlies the cultural indicators project of the Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec (see Allaire, 2006a, pp. 13-14).

The evolving fields of sustainability and quality of life

Culture is starting to enter the dialogues on sustainable development and on quality of life in two ways. First, culture informs the creation of the conceptual frameworks themselves: the development of indicators for sustainable development is informed by "our cultural perspectives and our values"; culture is an "underlying aspect of what it is we are actually choosing to measure in the first place" (Wieler). Second, culture – both physical and intangible aspects – contributes to a community's quality of life (see Michalos, 2004) and is an integral component of a sustainable community (see Duxbury & Gillette, 2007).

This emerging attention to culture provides connecting points for "outside" efforts in cultural indicator development, and may also provide keys to integrating culture into these broader frameworks on both a conceptual and pragmatic basis. We must note, however, that this is *emergent* interest and is not widespread nor commonly accepted as part of the research fields.[5] The workshop presentations and Michalos' writings indicate a number of possible "points of connection" for linking cultural considerations into sustainability and quality of life research. These are presented in Appendix A.

Key (conceptual) connecting points for culture evolving from practice

Throughout the workshop, participants expressed the need to connect cultural considerations to broader community issues such as quality of life, social and economic development, and so forth. On one hand, local governments and agencies are increasingly using quality of life considerations to attract people to cities. On the other hand, sustainability has become more than just about the environment, and has broadened to include culture and community development dimensions.

Approaches to incorporating cultural considerations within these contexts are evolving. Among workshop participants, there was a general desire to **shift the conceptual framework from a business model to a people-based model**. This would entail the creation of horizontal linkages to social infrastructure – and to the need to focus on culture for the sake of people, not institutions. In other words, indicators are needed that recognize that quality of life is not just economic.

Participants strongly want to be able to **indicate *why* culture is important** – e.g., positive impacts on quality of life, cultural/intellectual development, and social cohesion. In this

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[4] In this brief paper, it is not possible to delve into the conceptual and methodological constructs of the fields of quality of life and wellbeing indicators research and sustainability indicators research. For an overview of the quality of life research field, see Michalos (2003, 2005); Sirgy et al. (2006), and the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS) website: www.isqols.org/. For an overview of sustainability indicators research, see the Canadian Sustainability Indicators Network website: www.csin-rcid.ca/

[5] As Alex Michalos (2004) notes, "The impact of the arts broadly construed on the overall quality of people's lives is without a doubt the most understudied and possibly the most under-rated issue in the field of social indicators research. … Given the profoundly social aspects of the arts, their relative neglect by sociologists in general and by social indicators researchers in particular is both surprising and disturbing" (p. 3).

context, the indicators should reflect economic, intellectual, social/societal, and individual impacts, and identify the value(s) of culture in promoting quality of life in communities (see Appendix A). Within this purview, participants stressed the importance of selecting those items tied to 'causality' – where municipal policy/actions can have an impact.

Related to this, participants emphasized the importance of considering **inputs, outputs, and outcomes.** They felt that there is too much emphasis on the quantity of inputs, and not enough assessment of the quality of those inputs. As well, there is a need to both measure outputs and assess outcomes (outputs are short-term only; outcomes relate to the results of providing those outputs). They stressed that quantitative and qualitative data are equally important in assessing situations, for example, indicating life-enriching/life-altering impacts.

1.2. Methodological frameworks

A number of frameworks are used to guide the development of sustainability or quality of life indicators that could be adopted for cultural indicators. These frameworks provide guidelines to important parts of the development process and provide recommended methods for thinking through issues and decisions. These guidelines operate at different levels. At a very high level, the Bellagio Principles for developing sustainability indicators frames a general process. General approaches to developing indicators help further define an optimal methodological approach. More specifically, reference lists of criteria for developing good indicators (Acceptability Criteria) are useful at a more detailed level of selection and provide guidelines for discussions and negotiations over particular indicators. Alongside these criteria is an array of Critical Issues that have to be settled in order to assemble a group of indicators that contribute to a coherent and comprehensive set (Michalos, Sharpe, & Muhajarine, 2006).[6] Finally, given the multi-stakeholder and often "embedded-in-practice" nature of cultural indicator development, a range of general considerations and advice are useful contributions to informing a variety of methodological decisions and practices.

Process guidelines

Bellagio Principles
The Bellagio Principles for assessing sustainable development were developed in 1995 by an international group of measurement practitioners and researchers to review progress and synthesize the insights from practical references that were ongoing. They provide high-level guiding considerations in the following areas:

- Guiding vision and goals
- Holistic perspective
- Adequate scope (time horizons, geographic scale)
- Practical focus
- Openness (data, methods, judgments/assumptions/uncertainties/interpretations)
- Effective communication
- Broad participation
- Ongoing assessment
- Institutional capacity (ongoing support for indicator development)

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[6] Alex C. Michalos was scheduled to present at the workshop but was unable to attend due to flight cancellations. He has provided valuable information to inform this report which complements and extends the workshop discussions. In order to retain the flow of the workshop, while also incorporating his insights, I have chosen to place some of the key information provided in Figures that accompany this section.

General approaches to indicator development

Michalos, Sharpe, & Muhajarine (2006) present three broad approaches to the development of indicators and indexes of wellbeing:

> (1) Top-Down, where one begins by constructing a conceptual scheme of some sort describing one's understanding of wellbeing, including its constituents and determinants, (2) Bottom-Up, where one begins by exploring the great variety of available data that might be relevant to most people's understanding of wellbeing, and (3) Bi-Directional, where one begins by constructing and exploring somewhat simultaneously. One might characterize the Top-Down approach as theoretical, the Bottom-Up approach as empirical and the Bi-Directional approach as pragmatic.

The Bi-Directional or pragmatic approach best fits the situation for developing cultural indicators. Practically speaking, the Bi-Directional approach means that "we proceed patiently, transparently and flexibly, testing any ideas presented both against the hard evidence yielded by empirical research and against the common sense of the working group and as broad a constituency beyond it as our resources allow" (p. 2).

Indicator selection/development criteria

Many lists exist that outline criteria for developing good indicators; many overlap. Among these lists, three concepts stand out – credibility, relevance, and legitimacy:

> Are the indicators scientific and trustworthy? Can we trust what the data tells us? Are they relevant to decision-makers and to policy processes currently taking place? Are they legitimate? … Are the indicators acceptable by those who are affected by the issues, for which the indicators are being developed? Is the process being used to develop the indicators acceptable as well? Both the indicators themselves and how they are being developed touch on fairness and justice issues. (C. Wieler presentation)

Three sets of criteria for developing good indicators, derived from the sustainability and quality of life indicator fields, are presented in Appendix A. These criteria generally focus on the development and selection of individual indicators.

Critical issues

In order to assemble indicators that contribute to a coherent and comprehensive set, every indicator must also be considered against 21 Critical Issues (Michalos, Sharpe, & Muhajarine, 2006) (see Appendix A). These Critical Issues present a series of considerations to indicator developers to guide decisions and choices in the context of the overall set.

Additional considerations

During the workshop, a wide range of advice was offered, based on the experiences of researchers and users of indicators. Based on these discussions, some key things to consider are:

Purpose and use-context. What you want to include as an indicator depends on what you want to use it for. Therefore, it is imperative to be clear about why you are collecting the information (why it is needed), who/what you are collecting it for, and what you are going to

do with it (contexts of use). Indicators should be linked to policy and decision-making, and should feed into long-term and short-term objectives. Linking indicators values to targets (values, reference ranges, thresholds, or trends) was recommended. Indicator selection should also consider which dimensions can be affected by policy or programs – those aspects on which you would have an impact.

Realistic knowledge expectations. Be realistic about measurement standards. Critical questions to ask: "How are indicators selected? What are the objectives? What do they actually tell us?"

Establish core (shared) definitions, but ensure they can be broken down. While core definitions – defining what is in and what is out – must be agreed upon, participants agreed that there is no need for one overall definition to suit everyone; individual projects may address different aspects of culture and need to break down broad definitions to comparable parts as needed. In a "plea for diversity," they emphasized that there are many different ways to divide this area, a wide range of users, perspectives, uses, and use-contexts for developing and using the indicators. Related to this, participants agreed that in reports such as *Vital Signs* the presence of separate indicators is more important than how they are organized in the report (e.g., including library use under learning) – users will find, pull out, and re-organize as needed; the user can draw whatever picture they need. A participant recommended using the UNESCO definition of culture as a starting point.

Limit the number of indicators and issues addressed – this is a practice that is happening more and more.

Geographic scope – CMA vs. municipal boundaries. Geographic scope of data must be appropriate to be useful for a municipality. Having the right geographic line drawn around the issue being analyzed means the difference between being relevant and merely 'interesting.' This is not only an issue of the appropriateness of geographic scope, but also one of political relevancy, usefulness, and "uptake" by a municipality. For example, for most municipalities, CMA data is not as useful as municipality-specific data. The Ottawa-Gatineau case illustrates this issue well:

> If you live in Ottawa, CMA has a very specific meaning, in that CMA includes two cities in two different provinces. So every time we receive the data it is of marginal use to us. If you are a [municipal] government person and you are looking at these to impact your policy making, it becomes very difficult. … Often what it means for us is that we have to pay extra dollars to see this information broken down to be of use to us. I am sure this is also the case for other CMA areas. Municipalities are an order of government that needs this information to make policies within their area… [We need to have] a better breakdown if this is to be of use to local governments. Are the various stakeholders at the federal level looking at this?

Consider both local and provincial contexts. Local partnerships are key to get a common buy-in to what you are measuring and why, and to connect with the needs and perspectives of community members as to what issues are most important to them. Local-level indicators should also relate to provincial "screens"/initiatives underway (e.g., in Ontario, Quebec). For example, the OCCQ indicator project 's three interpretive foci – cultural vitality, cultural diversity, and access to culture – are useful categories to consider at the local level as well.

Comparability across communities is a challenge, but important. While it was acknowledged that "each city or municipality needs to have indicators that are linked very strongly to that community's own personality, interests, needs," the importance of common, comparable data was stressed. Projects such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Quality of Life Reporting System and the Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI) have brought to the fore the need to think flexibly, and perhaps to build in a type of flexibility in the indicators themselves. Sensitivity to size of municipality/community, as well as differing community realities and contexts, is very important.

> How can we measure some things that may be similar, but are not quite the same? And somehow find a way to index them so that you might have a barrel of apples and I might have a barrel of peaches, but it's a barrel, and it's produce. Define the common features, and then come up with a score because we just don't have the same things … it's a challenge because even geographically we are so diverse, and in our heritage and built structures we are so diverse.

These projects are finding that municipalities may not measure things the same way, or may not have the numbers (e.g., on municipal spending on culture). These types of issues and restrictions are making it challenging to pick what can be measured across communities.[7]

2. Content: Key subject areas identified

> It's about belonging, it's about identity and it's about expression. We have to look at how you measure that. What are we measuring? And what difference does it make when you measure it? How do you apply the number of performing arts seats in your community to the quality of life? … It has to be linked to things like "How does it affect the well-being of people?" It also produces wealth. It provides people with jobs, as well as the meaningful expressions of the persons' identity. It's about social inclusion, how people from new lands who come into your community are welcomed; how they are included; how they participate and how they can express their cultures – and everybody's culture. This is what we are struggling with …

> Given that each municipality has different service levels, different service frameworks; different service delivery mechanisms… If you start to look at the size; the per capita; the historical context in which they were developed; the prominent residents; their investment and a lot of other areas… I think it is going to be very difficult to come up with a standard set of indicators across Canada.

The workshop aimed to collectively identify key topic clusters that would create a beginning framework or map for considering, developing, and interpreting cultural indicators at the local level. Two approaches were used to begin to develop these indicator topic areas (for the local level):

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[7] One suggested approach to address this situation entails going to a very high level ("the 50,000 foot level"), to determine municipalities' shared values, goals, and objectives: "While we all have different mandates and have different ways of defining things, we probably have a common core. … The challenge is that when you begin to drill down and begin to separate the various layers, people will have different perspectives."

1. An international scan and assessment of major cultural indicator projects reviewed the indicators developed in the projects and sorted them into six reoccurring categories (Simons & Dang, 2006). This background research paper was circulated to participants in advance of the workshop.

2. Workshop subgroups were asked to propose their "top 10" indicators, and present their ideas to the larger group. Then, all participants scanned the proposed topics and marked those that resonated most strongly with them by placing dots by those items on the flipchart pages. This technique provided a rough indication of those areas that collectively resonated with the participants, which were later organized into topic clusters (see Figure 4).

International scan

The indicator categories developed through examining the international projects strongly resonated with workshop participants:

- Environmental enhancement and regeneration of place
- Individual well-being and personal development
- Social capital and community building
- Economic development
- Cultural vitality of community
- Health and sustainability of the cultural sector

Workshop categories

Workshop discussions tended to favour an inclusive approach to considering what could be included within a local cultural framework.[8] Participation-related indicators were widely discussed, and incorporated a range of considerations and issues, from general scope – i.e., include amateur sector – to measuring types of participation. For example, many participants wished to monitor and create indicators that look at cross-cultural attendance at events ("cross-cultural" or "intercultural" participation vs. ethnically specific participation). Opportunities to participate and accessibility were also prevalent considerations.

Under a general umbrella of "community assets and dynamics," seven interlinked clusters emerged:

- Facilities/spaces
- Capacity/activity levels
- Accessibility and opportunity
- Participation and value
- Cultural labour market
- Value-added economic outputs
- Government involvement/investment

An additional "cluster" reflected broader conceptual connections on outcomes that the participants strongly desired:

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[8] For example, participants felt that it was important to include libraries, and to look at them as more than just books (i.e., circulation numbers). They stressed that libraries are the community centres ("community gathering places") for many communities. As well, heritage and culture were widely recognized as are intrinsically linked, although admittedly challenging to integrate because different institutions link them differently or don't link them at all. (One suggestion to integrating them was "heritage" as cultural keepers and "culture" as cultural creators.)

- Longitudinal impacts of cultural involvement/activities
- Measure of capital in terms of: physical, social, intellectual, cultural, economic and how they interact with each other

These clusters are presented in Figure 1. The clusters were developed by the author to organize the various topics suggested at the workshop (included in the diagram), and were not created by the workshop participants. Another analyst might combine the topics in a different manner.

Figure 1. Cultural Indicators at the Local Level: Key Topic Clusters
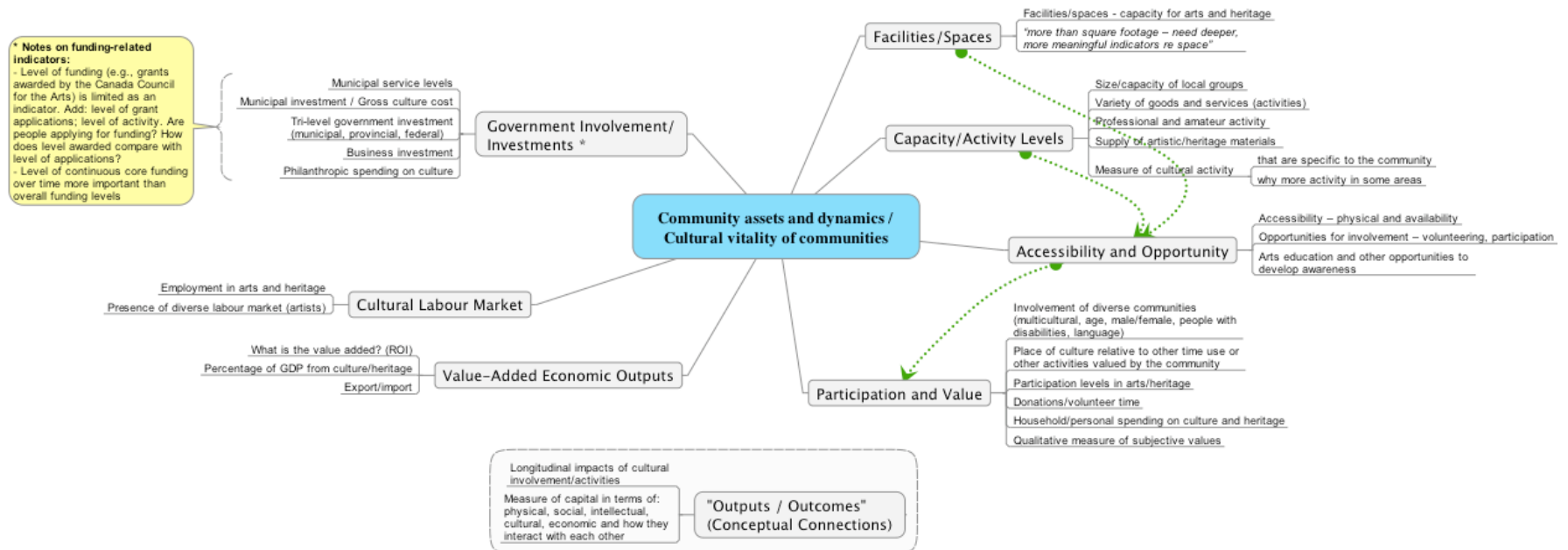
Note: This is a preliminary map of topics suggested in the workshop.

3. Practical uses of cultural indicators

Indicators are developed as a component of communities' leadership and governance systems and structures, serving as tools and inputs into governance systems as well as policy catalysts and tools for mobilizing change (Duxbury, 2005). The workshop confirmed that the development of cultural indicators is tightly linked to the complex contexts in which they are created and the intended uses, while also influenced by concerns about unintended or inappropriate uses.

At the local level, the uses are multi-faceted and grounded in a variety of practical applications and processes – not all initially anticipated. *Intra*-municipal usability and relevance and the need for appropriate *inter*-municipal comparability emerged as key areas of concern. Concerns of *practicality in development* and *utility to users* became overarching principles.

Contextualizing these pragmatic uses was the desire to advance cultural development as an element of community development through better understanding (e.g., Why are some communities culturally vibrant while others are not? How do municipal and other governments' actions and investments in culture affect the community over time? etc.).

3.1. Local government uses

> From a municipal/local level perspective, the reason, and how we are using indicators is all about one of defending our service levels. Providing that rationale and building a critical business case. For our purposes, we do not stick to one set of indicators. We are able to adapt it and use it, and it's all about wanting to keep us going, moving our agenda forward and being able to respond to whatever the climate at the time is. … If we can use the indicators to be able to help us move our agendas and defend what we are doing, and have that flexibility built in to be able to interpret and use the data in the best way that fits that municipality at that time. That is what I am looking for. Again, it's just helping us to keep going. Using them for guides.

Current situation/general context

Indicators have become a major requirement in both governance and program administration – they are a major topic of conversation administratively, and politically important. Municipal issues frame indicator choices, and indicators should be linked to municipal policies and actions. Establishing linkages between culture and other policy areas and issues has also grown increasingly important (e.g., how culture – concrete aspects – can contribute to addressing issues, support economic development, tourism, integration of newcomers, income growth, innovation, technology, etc.). In turn, as mentioned earlier, these linkages are often framed by broad considerations of *quality of life* and *sustainability*.

Establishing these linkages and alliances can be challenging. Different "specialty areas" in local government (e.g., economic development, social need) use indicators very differently, for different purposes – this must be factored into any selection of indicators. More broadly, budgetary and administrative processes within a municipality tend to create situations where culture and other program/service areas compete for municipal resources, and to be municipal priorities.

The "burden of proof" for cultural investments is generally perceived to be much higher than for economic investments. This demand for proving the need for cultural investments is tied to the validity and *perceived validity* of non-economic information/data/indicators, "subjective data," etc. Availability and validity of any data is a key issue. Incorporating and integrating local knowledge, often subjective in nature based on ongoing observations and deep understanding of the local situation, is also very important. It is not always clear, however, how this information is best captured and communicated.[9]

Comparability among municipalities is both a need and a source of concern. While necessary and valuable, the push for comparable indicators is also a source of some concern, especially in regards to who selects the comparative indicators and how the indicators may be used. In some situations, the indicators on which municipalities may be compared are selected by senior municipal managers rather than by cultural professionals, which can undermine the entire process if the selected indicators are not the most appropriate. A related concern is how the indicators are used later on, especially the undesired (but expected) use of indicators to rank municipalities.[10] These possibilities underscore the importance that indicator selection and interpretation be embedded in extensive knowledge of culture and community dynamics.

Examples

Some practical uses of cultural indicators mentioned by workshop participants are:

- Defending the culture budget
- Determining budgets, reallocating budgets, setting expenditure levels based on what indicators show
- Increasing funding to culture
- Leveraging funds from other levels of government, private, philanthropic sources – ties to advocacy
- Benchmarking among different municipalities – benchmarking tools, comparatives, discussion points for further investigation/actions
- Accountability – "Accounting for dollars invested; results reporting for the programmes; public accountability to the taxpayers"
- Program evaluation – Indicators do not measure the efficiency and effectiveness of government programs directly, yet this "desired use" comes up a lot. Indicators generally provide a long-term view of what's going on – how much of what is going on can you attribute to government programmes?
- Developing business cases for initiatives/proposed actions
- Influencing policy
- Program development (e.g., indicators based on artist incomes and rising housing costs helped argue the need for affordable space for Vancouver's artists if the municipality wished to keep them in the city, which led to re-zoning to create work-live space for artists, among other initiatives)
- Raising awareness – indicators are good for raising awareness about selected issues, discussion points to get people talking about an issue, to raise both profile and understanding of an issue (inside local government and in the community)

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[9] Thorough mapping exercises of cultural assets and issues in a municipality are seen as an important companion to cultural indicator development, but municipal resources are insufficient to undertake such broad exercises. "Investing the money to do these exercises does pay longer-term benefits" (see Stewart, 2007).

[10] See also Duxbury (2003).

- Advocacy – indicators provide a way of demonstrating need, and justify needs for additional resources from other levels of government
- Cultural infrastructure – to recognize need for space, place, and access – traditionally, infrastructure-related indicators have focused on economic impact: This was seen as too narrow – "we need to be thinking about what the social impact of all these things are as well," and to measure the accessibility of the infrastructure.
- Community mobilization – use indicators that can be accessed by community organizations
- Economic development – traditional practice "economic impacts" (what about social impacts?)
- Neighbourhood revitalization – to profile and track change; assess effectiveness of initiatives
- The FCM Quality of Life Reporting System strives to respond to: "What is it that our municipal members want to be able to say, or see, about their community that allows them to guide their actions?" FCM consolidates the reporting to say: "Here's a picture of what the municipalities look like today, and here are some of the issues."

3.2. Uses by others in communities

A variety of governance, funding, and community development organizations and agencies develop and use local-level cultural indicators for many purposes. Two examples of these additional use-contexts were described at the workshop:

1. Community Foundations use indicators to inform their grantees and donors, and guide their decision-making and granting processes:

   - Inform grant-making – provide information to grantees to indicate priority areas to fund
   - Inform donors about some of the issues facing the community
   - Assist community foundations in making connections between individuals and groups to address those issues

2. The United Way of Canada – Action for Neighbourhood Change project plans to use neighbourhood-level indicators to:

   - Profile selected neighbourhoods to understand and take action to change – need, assets, …
   - Assess whether change has occurred
   - Compare what works under what kind of circumstances
   - Compare across a city or among different cities

As these types of organizations (and others) grow increasingly involved in community governance and development processes, it is imperative that they are included in work to further develop cultural indicators at the local level.

4. Good practices in developing and using cultural indicators

Many recommendations for indicator development were offered during the workshop, which have been incorporated throughout this report. This section pulls together some of the good practices pointed out by the workshop participants, so that work in this area builds on the experiences and advice of indicator developers and users.

Conceptual frameworks

Link cultural considerations to a broader conceptual framework such as quality of life, sustainability, or societal communication. In these efforts, attend especially to conceptual frameworks that focus on people – build linkages to social infrastructure and focus on culture for the sake of people, not solely institutions/economics. Strive to indicate why culture is important, the value of culture to a community. Use topic clusters as means to link individual indicator elements into broader community cultural systems. Build upon the efforts of similar projects nationally and internationally.

Methodological frameworks

Examine, adopt, and/or build upon the range of rich and complex frameworks (including concepts, principles, guidelines, approaches, and processes) that have been developed in the quality of life and sustainability indicator fields, including:

- The Bellagio Principles for developing sustainability indicators, to frame general processes;
- Reference lists of criteria for good indicators, to provide useful guidelines for selecting and developing particular indicators; and
- The array of Critical Issues to assembling indicators that contribute to a coherent and comprehensive set.

Indicator selection/analysis

Know the purpose for which you are collecting data (the use-context), and maintain realistic knowledge expectations. While it is important to link indicators to policy and decision-making, tie the indicators to municipal issues, not just the municipality's needs – "municipal issues" incorporates both municipal and community needs; setting indicators involves input from various stakeholders.

To help ensure a clear picture of a situation or issue, use a variety of indicators and types of data, but limit the overall number of indicators used. Facilitate data and indicator interpretation by people from multiple disciplines and multiple stakeholders, to help ensure accurate analysis. Keep data accessible to enable community to use. Do not talk only in terms of numbers, nor solely in terms of an economic approach.

To help ensure comparability and usefulness, attend to geographic scope – e.g., CMA vs. municipal boundaries. It is also essential to consider both local and broader contexts (provincial, national, international). Finally, a longitudinal approach can build an understanding of how municipal actions/investments are affecting things. Be consistent to enable longitudinal observations (e.g., in data collection, analysis).

Reporting/communications

Third party reports (e.g., *Vital Signs*) were felt to be very influential, and especially powerful if indicators are tied to report cards (e.g., Toronto Report Card on its Culture Plan) or grades (e.g., *Vital Links*). Overall, simply structured indicators and clear, plain language are key to effective communication.

Communication among creators/users

Maintain good communication among collectors of data/creators of indicators, and between indicator creators and users/decision-makers. Good communication underlies the development of a productive learning context for this work, addresses misunderstandings and assumptions, and maintains realistic expectations.

- **Regional example** – PCH Vancouver office (BC-Yukon-Alberta Division) is raising the issue of indicators at tri-level cultural meetings in BC and Alberta involving federal, provincial, and municipal governments and community foundations. They are finding that everyone has their own things they want to measure, and what they each are collecting. This discussion influences the thinking of individual parties and increases the validity and acceptability of the indicators that each is developing. This discussion enables each level to have a better sense of what the other levels are thinking about and doing, and where they are going.
- **Across sectors** – Learn from other sectors' experiences with indicators, keep connecting, avoid duplicating efforts.
- **Across communities** – Network and share – Learn from other communities, continually share what is happening in these areas as much as possible.

5. State of research

5.1. Where is the capacity to do this on an ongoing basis?

Within a general research context marked by research cutbacks at all levels of government, and non-profit organizations and public institutions increasingly stretched by growing demands and shrinking resources, collaborative efforts are required to move ahead.

Collective initiatives among local governments are important steps forward to developing intermunicipal comparative knowledge but face challenges such as:

- The indicators, process, objectives, and parameters are not necessarily selected by cultural professionals
- Different people are involved in meetings or teleconferences – difficult to move forward
- Low level of reporting – limited comparability, potentially resulting in inaccurate perspectives

These observations contrast with the widespread interest and need for this work, and growing institutional demands for accountability and comparability. Thus, they appear to be symptoms of insufficient resources dedicated to this task (i.e., staff stretched too thin and/or this work not seen as a priority) and may reflect the "early days" status of work in this area.

Other collective initiatives such as the *Vital Signs* project of Community Foundations of Canada highlight the emergence of broader community-rooted indicators. *Vital Signs'* approach to selecting, developing, and interpreting indicators involved a wide range of community stakeholders and leaders in the various communities. Questions about why particular indicators were selected (or not selected) draw attention to the iterative nature of this work.

Other research and development work in this field also plays a role if it directly and meaningfully involves the developers-users in the development–analysis–dissemination processes.[11] Isolated or unconnected efforts are often of limited use in application, policy, and action contexts. A challenge in any "connected" initiative, however, is that those who wish to be involved must make the time to participate at the time it is most needed in the project, which is often very difficult to do in a multi-faceted (and stretched) working context. A related challenge is to organize and implement the initiative in a flexible and iterative manner which can incorporate different time availabilities, timelines, and multiple knowledges and insights into the initiative's design, content, and interpretation.

Altogether, the multi-stakeholder nature of this evolving research field demands that further work be undertaken in a collective and collaborative manner. This necessary approach brings with it research, communication, networking, and resource-sharing challenges, but is the key context in which such efforts must be pursued.

5.2. State of knowledge – Key issues

Workshop participants identified the following as key research issues:

Real know-how on indicator development. In a context in which the use of indicators is a very "hot" topic, awareness is high around the need and the demand for using indicators. However, participants highlighted the need for "reliable analysis" and perceived that not many people have the know-how or understanding of how to really use indicators properly – "especially the more subjective issues."

Definition challenges. Multiple definitions, the widening scope for culture (and related terms), and ambiguity in understandings of culture and cultural impacts hinder the development of unambiguous indicators (see, e.g., Simo, 2004). As well, to connect culture with different policy areas (and municipal departments), knowledge of differing vocabularies and mindsets is imperative. It is challenging but necessary to establish and use common language with the same meaning.

Need for clear conceptual models, connections. There is a growing need to link culture to different topics (innovation, technology, employment, other issues) but the conceptual links may not yet be determined. Similarly, quality of life and sustainability form increasingly important contexts for analysis and interpretation, but explicitly incorporating cultural considerations within these frameworks is a recent development and still evolving. In the absence of articulated conceptual models, most people are counting things like revenues, expenditures, attendance and participation, and neglecting questions of value or underlying issues of "why" (see Appendix A, "Considerations of Value").

While there is a desire to establish these conceptual linkages and models before developing indicators, a Bi-Directional (pragmatic) methodological approach is most appropriate in the

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[11] As an example, the Creative City Network of Canada's Intermunicipal Comparative Framework (Phase 1) was developed in this way, involving staff from approximately 30 local governments in its development.

current situation. In this approach, the conceptual framework and indicators are constructed in tandem and flexibly tested against one another as the work proceeds (Michalos, Sharpe, & Muhajarine, 2006).

Availability of data / Accessibility of data. Two observable approaches to data availability that emerged in the workshop are: an available-data-driven approach and a concept-driven/what-data-is-available "compromise" approach. In both cases, cultural indicators development is tightly linked to data. Cultural indicators are generally based on data that already exists and limited attention has been directed to creating new data for this purpose.

Existing definitions and frameworks for data collection are being pressured by widening definitions of culture and new demands. Traditional data sets designed, say 35 years ago, may have met all needs then but no longer do so. Meanwhile, the development of indicators where we don't have existing data is challenged in (at least) three ways:

- New research is stifled by cost.
- Insufficient awareness of pragmatic methodological options – what techniques are available?
- A general tendency to "shy away from" subjective things that are hard to measure

Quality data analysis. Both *reliable data* and *reliable analysis* of what indicators mean are crucial. Workshop participants repeatedly stressed the importance of quality analysis and having good, reliable interpretation – we have to know "what the indicator actually tells us." This echoes the emphasis placed on « synthèse intelligente » ("informed synthesis") by the Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec, a key objective of its indicators project.

This need for knowledgability and reliable analysis also highlighted the need for capacity within the organizations using and interpreting the data in its various use-contexts. In a sea of data, there is not always the capacity to do a thorough analysis of it: "We have to be careful that we are not just asking for data – we also have to have analysis ... and the capacity within our organizations to do a proper analysis." These concerns link back to the prevailing state of knowledge about how to develop and use indicators appropriately and well.

6. Recommendations / Next Steps

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, many municipalities, non-profit organizations, academics, and other levels of government are actively involved in processes to develop cultural indicators at a local level. The "Cities and Communities: Cultural Indicators at the Local Level" workshop brought many of these parties together to discuss their experiences and plans, and to begin to address shared challenges. Discussions during the workshop illustrated the multi-stakeholder nature of this evolving field and highlighted the need for collaborative efforts to move ahead. This necessary approach brings with it research, communication, networking, and resource-sharing challenges, but is the key context in which such efforts must be pursued.

Thus, recommendations for follow-up from the workshop are presented in two parts: *Research-related* and *Facilitating connections and dialogue*.

Research-related

To collaboratively set out guidelines and norms to facilitate, inform, and guide collective research and practice around cultural indicator development and use:

- Create a cultural indicator development project involving municipalities, community leaders, and researchers with a component being the creation of overall guidelines and norms to guide research and practice in this area (like a "standards council").
- Create accessible guidelines or toolkits on developing and using indicators appropriately.
- Organize a cross-sector workshop re good practices regarding indicator development, interpretation, and use.

To complement and extend the current efforts of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Quality of Life Reporting System (Culture Working Group) to develop a set of cultural indicators, and to raise the profile and inform local government decision-makers about cultural indicators:

- Collaborate with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Creative City Network of Canada, and Les Arts et la ville on the development of a Theme Report on Cultural Indicators, as part of the FCM Quality of Life Reporting System. (The QOLRS topical reports dig a little deeper into specific indicator areas; see, e.g., FCM, 2004a, 2004b.)

To extend and build upon the recommendations on good practices provided at this workshop, especially in regards to interpretation, reporting, and communication (where fewer examples were provided):

- Further investigate 'best practices' in the use and impact of local culture indicators. This could be addressed with a wider survey of municipalities' practices and findings, with follow-up interviews. Some examples from outside Canada, e.g., from the United States and Australia, would be useful.

To assist the development of meaningful comparative indicators by helping to identify common threads among diverse community situations:

- Among municipalities (and other levels of government and other stakeholders), identify common elements in terms of communities' overall goals and objectives for arts and culture – articulate shared values to help frame and structure indicator topic areas. For example: diversity – arts and culture is the celebration and encouragement and support of diversity (e.g., ethnic background, etc.).

To build upon the preliminary cluster topic areas for cultural indicators presented in this report:

- Review and refine the suggested topic clusters for indicators that emerged from the background research and workshop processes (e.g., as a pilot project). This must be done with full and meaningful involvement of municipalities, community foundations, United Way, and other stakeholders.

To address data availability and analysis issues by building more robust knowledge bases in which to develop and interpret cultural indicators:

- Enable municipalities, through federal and provincial funding, to undertake broad cultural mapping exercises, to tie into municipal cultural planning processes and to ground indicator development and selection.

Facilitating connections and dialogue

At the workshop, individuals involved in developing and using cultural indicators at the local level (e.g., the FCM's Quality of Life Reporting System Cultural Working Group, individual municipalities) conversed with Statistics Canada's Culture Statistics staff, some for the first time. Building from this introduction and realizing the importance of fostering ongoing relationships and dialogue:

- Facilitate greater dialogue between local level data users and data providers – Consolidate local level cultural indicator data needs and issues, and approach Statistics Canada's Culture Statistics Program to discuss whether these needs can be addressed. Although comprehensive city-level analysis will probably never be a realistic or affordable solution, discussions could begin to look at whether there could be some better use of administrative files or special city-level surveys carried out by Statistics Canada or another party. Aim to open an ongoing dialogue with Statistics Canada.

To build on the leadership shown by municipalities, provinces, and community foundations in various projects collectively contributing to this research (see examples in the introduction):

- Use tri-level meetings in all provinces to explore issues, practices and plans re cultural indicators and foster dialogue on this topic among municipal, provincial, and federal government levels and community foundations.
- Place cultural indicators on the agenda of a meeting of the federal/provincial/territorial ministers of culture, and request that they work more closely with municipalities, community foundations, other stakeholders, and Statistics Canada to explore and consider possible means to address shared data needs and issues relating to cultural indicators meaningful at a local level that can be rolled up to provincial and federal levels.

To build on the emerging networking resources in this area (Indicators-L listserv, Research Directory of Cultural Indicator Initiatives on www.creativecity.ca/cecc):

- Launch a research or publication project, rooted in knowledge exchange among researchers and a variety of users, which would extend these networking efforts and nurture communications and linkages among stakeholders and others interested in this research area.

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Projects described at the workshop:

Canadian Sustainability Indicators Network – Project with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to develop community indicators in Aboriginal communities in Manitoba

Community Foundations of Canada – Vital Signs

Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Quality of Life Reporting System – Culture indicators working group

Mapping Quality of Life and the Culture of Small Cities CURA – involving Thompson Rivers University (and others)

Metropolis Project – looking at cultural indicators that help with immigrant integration; concepts of cultural citizenship

Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (OMBI)

PCH involved in Council of Europe "Culture and Democracy" project – connecting culture, defined broadly, with a range of other themes with political resonance in the context of European unity

Quebec Observatory on Culture and Communications – developing a system of indicators on culture and communications for Quebec (presentation)

Quebec Observatory on Culture and Communications – municipal advisory group – comparable municipal investments in culture ($s) for 11 largest cities in Quebec

Statistics Canada:

> Census Metropolitan Areas as Culture Clusters report (Coish, 2004)

> Time Use Study (in process) – analyzing results of the General Social Survey (2005) on participation and use of time – participation rates in various cultural activities

> Household Spending Survey (in process) – how much is spent in the area of cultural activities; differentiation by rural and urban areas

United Way of Canada (in partnership with the Tamarack and Caledon institutes and the National Film Board of Canada) – Action for Neighbourhood Change

+ Work of individual local governments (e.g., Ottawa, Toronto, Windsor)

Appendix A. Methodology – details and notes

Sustainability and Quality of Life Research: Cultural Connections

Frameworks of sustainable development:

- **Capital framework** – cultural capital, comprising both *physical capital* (e.g., artworks, buildings, sites, objects with cultural significance) and *intellectual capital* (the more "interior" aspects of culture, e.g., ideas, practices, beliefs, artworks that exist in the public domain) (Throsby, 1995). *But this idea isn't widespread.*

- **3+ Pillars framework** – interdependence of culture (4th pillar) with environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainable development (e.g., Cardinal & Adin, 2005)

- **Ecosystem and human well-being framework** – culture can be considered as part of human well-being

A few perspectives on how culture can fit within the context of sustainable development:

- **Inter-generational linkages** –society as custodian of culture for future generations (Throsby, 1995)

- **Equity** – culture for all – distribution of cultural resources; access to cultural participation; provision of cultural services for disadvantaged groups (Throsby, 1995)

- The Province of Manitoba's 2005 sustainability report links community and culture together and to sustainable development: "In many ways, community and culture represent the fabric of sustainable development" (p. 54). The report talks about *community engagement* (sense of belonging, citizen involvement in organizations, donations), *heritage conservation* (number of heritage sites), and *primary language spoken at home* (retention of mother tongue).

Social indicators/Quality of life research:

Michalos (2004) defines two types of cultural indicators and situates them within the social indicators field:

- Measures of people's beliefs and feelings about the arts = cultural indicators, as a species of subjective social indicators

- Simple counts of things such as art museums, painters, government funding, etc. = cultural indicators, as a species of objective social indicators

A few perspectives on how art[12] can be connected with social indicators/quality of life research:

- Effect of music on feelings and behaviour; use of music in therapeutic settings; positive impact of music on health

- Socio-economic networks enabling artistic production ("art worlds"; Becker, 1982)

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[12] Michalos (2006) chooses to refer to *the arts*, defined broadly through a list of various artistic activities and things, than to *culture* with its many definitions.

- The social value of art as a public good: "some [public] goods are such that one's appreciation, taste and appetite for them increases monotonically with their consumption" – e.g., engagement in the consumption and/or production of cultural goods, other kinds of civic participation, and nondiscriminatory human interaction (Michalos, 2006, p. 38; Throsby, 1994). The bundling of cultural engagement and other types of civic participation is particularly interesting.[13]

- Correlating personal participation in arts activities, perceptions of benefits, and general perceptions of quality of life (Michalos, 2004)

- "Non-use values" – Types of values enjoyed by a community's non-users/participants (Frey, 2003)

Criteria for developing good indicators

From the perspective of sustainability indicators, Chenje, Pintér, & Swanson (2007) present additional criteria for good indicators:

- Developed within an accepted conceptual framework
- Clearly defined and easy to understand
- Reasonable data requirements
- Acceptable cost
- Sensitive to change ("Are they actually going to show us what we need to know, or are they going to change in a way where we are not sure what the change means?")
- Limited in number (Presented by Carissa Wieler)

Benoit Allaire (2006a, p. 6) outlined five categories of selection criteria used in the culture and communications indicator project of the Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec (OCCQ):

1. *Theoretical:* refers to the internal validity of the indicator, which confirms the fit between the indicator and the feature it represents.
2. *Methodological:* refers to the reliability of the indicator, its coherence and its consistency.
3. *Analytical:* refers to the comparability of the indicator over time and place.
4. *Practical:* refers to the existence and the availability of the data needed to construct the indicator.
5. *Political:* refers to the interests the indicator represents and its capacity to affect political actions.

Each category has a *descriptive* dimension (adopted from IFACCA, 2005) and a *quality* dimension (developed by OCCQ, starting with criteria enunciated by Horn, 1993).[14] Proposed indicators are assessed against all five categories. (The categories are outlined in Benoit Allaire's PowerPoint presentation and in his background paper [Allaire, 2006a, p. 7].)

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[13] Michalos (2006) notes: "any reasonable composite measure of the wellbeing of individuals or communities must include measures of such things that capture this very special feature" (p. 38).
[14] This selection grid was inspired by the work of Godin, Gingras, & Bourneuf (1997) who used such a grid to select indicators for culture, science, and technology.

Adequacy or Acceptability Criteria (both terms are used) are defined as desirable properties for any acceptable indicator or composite index. From the perspective of developing a wellbeing index, Michalos, Sharpe, & Muhajarine (2006, p. 4) developed a list of 12 Acceptability Criteria:

1. Relevant to the concerns of [the] main target audiences
2. Easy to understand
3. Reliable and valid
4. Politically unbiased
5. Easy to obtain and periodically update
6. Comparable across jurisdictions and groups
7. Objective or subjective
8. Positive or negative
9. A constituent or determinant of wellbeing, or both
10. Attributable to individuals or groups of animate or inanimate objects
11. Obtained through an open, transparent and democratic consultative review process
12. Going to contribute to a coherent and comprehensive view of the wellbeing of Canadians

From the perspective of developing indicators for the local level, see also *Aspects of Good City Indicators* presented in Hoornweg et al. (2006, p. 12).

Less formally, workshop participants suggested the following characteristics of good indicators in the municipal environment, indicators should:

- Neutral / Objective
- Flexible (to respond to changing political governance)
- Reflect and be sensitive to a variety of time scales: Long-term impacts or outcomes vs. short-term efficiency/effectiveness
- In addition, in the context of comparability among municipalities, indicators must:
- Be flexible (to accommodate different municipal realities, available measures).
- Incorporate shared standards and definitions so that selected key indicators can roll-up to provincial/national level (e.g., Demographics, Participation, Investment, Employment, Volunteer rate, Social capital, Donations).
- Resonate with indicator development work at the provincial level (not required, but good), which is conducted on topics such as the health of the cultural sector, conditions of heritage buildings (state of, maintenance/conservation investments adequate), and volunteer participation.

21 Critical issues

(Michalos, Sharpe, & Muhajarine, 2006, pp. 5-6)

1. *Individual, group or both bases*: e.g., per capita incomes are inferred attributes applying to individuals, while unemployment rates are inferred attributes applying to groups.

2. *Spatial coordinates*: e.g., the best size to understand air pollution may be different from the best size to understand crime.

3. *Temporal coordinates*: e.g., the optimal duration to understand resource depletion may be different from the optimal duration to understand the impact of sanitation changes.

4. *Population composition*: e.g., analyses by language, sex, age, education, ethnic background, income, etc. may reveal or conceal different things.

5. *Domains of life composition*: e.g., different domains like health, job, family life, housing, etc. give different views and suggest different agendas for action.

6. *Objective versus subjective indicators*: e.g., relatively subjective appraisals of housing and neighborhoods by actual dwellers may be very different from relatively objective appraisals by "experts".

7. *Positive versus negative indicators*: negative indicators seem to be easier to craft for some domains, which may create a biased assessment, e.g., in the health domain measures of morbidity and mortality may crowd out positive measures of wellbeing.

8. *Input versus output indicators*: e.g., expenditures on teachers and school facilities may give a very different view of the quality of an education system from that based on student performance on standardized tests, and both may be very different from assessing whether the populace at large is becoming more literate, knowledgeable, educated, and wise.

9. *Benefits and costs*: different measures of value or worth yield different overall evaluations as well as different evaluations for different people, e.g., the market value of child care is far below the personal, social or human value of having children well cared for.

10. *Recipient populations*: Who should be included as a recipient for particular benefits and costs?

11. *Measurement scales*: e.g., different measures of wellbeing provide different views of people's wellbeing and relate differently to other measures.

12. *Research personnel*: e.g., different stakeholders often have very different views about what is important to monitor and how to evaluate whatever is monitored.

13. *Report readers*: e.g., different target audiences need different reporting media and/or formats.

14. *Aggregation function*: e.g., once indicators are selected, they must be combined, integrated, or aggregated somehow in order to get a coherent story or view.

15. *Distributions*: e.g., because average figures can conceal extraordinary and perhaps unacceptable variation, choices must be made about appropriate representations of distributions.

16. *Distance impacts*: e.g., people living in one place may access facilities (hospitals, schools, theatres, museums, libraries) in many other places at varying distances from their place of residence.

17. *Causal relations*: Prior to intervention, one must know what causes what (interaction effects), which requires relatively mainstream scientific research, which may not be available yet. At a minimum, correlations among variables should be explored with a view to discovering possible evidence of dependence or independence, redundancy and double-counting.

18. *Discount rates*: How much should one discount costs and benefits delivered some time in the future compared to those delivered today?

19. *Confidence levels*: What levels of confidence should one require to accept any particular claim or measure?

20. *Auditors*: Who should decide if any assessments are adequate or appropriate?

21. *Auditing criteria*: What criteria should be used to assess the adequacy of auditors' assessments, the adequacy of the procedures used for audits and even the adequacy of the answers to questions raised with the previous 20 issues?

Considerations of value

"Quality of life for a person or community is a function of objectively measurable circumstances and what people perceive them to be, what they think and feel about what they perceive them to be, and what they do about it. Regarding the subset of cultural indicators dealing with art-related activities, we are very short on data and theories about the subjective side of things. Lots of people are measuring revenues, expenditures, attendance, participation but very few are asking, e.g., why are people spending, attending? What are their motives and what success are they having at getting what they hoped to get? How do they think and feel, and put these things together to evaluate their spending, participation, etc. … [These aspects] are routinely neglected when we talk about measuring culture and the subset of arts-related activities."

(Alex Michalos, personal communication, January 7, 2007)

To address this issue, it is useful to reference the array of kinds of value developed by economist Bruno Frey: Financial value, Consumption value, Existence value, Option value, Prestige value, Education value, Innovation value, Intrinsic or Merit value, Aesthetic value, Bequest value, Moral value, Social value (see Frey, 2003; Michalos, 2006, pp. 38-39).

A rare example of research incorporating these values is Michalos' 2006 survey on Arts and Quality of Life in five BC communities (preliminary results released in February 2007). The survey includes an extensive list of kinds of activities people think of as arts-related and many ideas about motives people have for participating, from which 5 indexes were created: Index of Arts as health enhancing, as self-developing, as community building, as ends in themselves, and as spirit building. The questionnaire also includes questions addressing Multiple Discrepancies Theory (MDT) of subjective wellbeing, Diener's measure of Subjective Wellbeing, and Lavallee/Hatch's Contentment with Life Assessment Scale, Life Satisfaction, Happiness, and Subjective Wellbeing.

Appendix B. Workshop agenda

Cities and Communities:
Cultural Indicators at the Local Level

Place: Annex Room, Government Conference Centre, Ottawa
Date: Monday, November 27, 2006
Time: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

AGENDA

9:00 am   Introductions / Welcome

Sharon Jeannotte, Department of Canadian Heritage
Nancy Duxbury, Creative City Network of Canada

9:15 - 10:30   **Presentations**

FCM's Quality of Life Reporting System and culture
-    Dallas Alderson/John Burrett, Federation of Canadian Municipalities
-    Barbara Nehiley - Halifax Regional Municipality; chair of the FCM QOLRS Cultural Working Group

Culture in the context of quality of life indicators
-    Alex Michalos, University of Northern British Columbia; "Mapping Quality of Life and the Culture of Small Cities" CURA

Culture in the context of sustainability indicators
-    Carissa Wieler, Canadian Sustainability Indicators Network

Counting culture in Quebec: a system of indicators for culture and communications
-    Benoit Allaire, Quebec Observatory on Culture and Communications

Q&A

10:30 - 10:45   Break

10:45 - 12:30   **Current cultural indicator initiatives and interests:**
Open-mike roundtable for sharing information and issues of content and context

More detailed discussions at the breakout sessions.

12:30 - 1:30   Lunch

1:30 - 2:30   **Breakout session: What are we indicating?**
Methodologies, approaches, rationales, and selection issues

Key discussion areas/issues:

Defining the general content of cultural indicators
-    How can we benchmark "cultural vibrancy" in context of non-unified culture?
-    Should "culture" be treated generally as one holistic item, or divided into a list of various categories/sectors?
-    Should we include heritage within a cultural indicators umbrella, or treat it somewhat differently/separately?
-    Should we include libraries, or does this overlap with social infrastructure?

- How can we balance arts and heritage-oriented items with civic and integration-oriented concerns?

Selecting indicators
- Can "10 top things" be identified and focused on?
- What are good strategies to select the most appropriate indicators?
- How can changes over time be related to other community contexts?

Data sources and comparability
- What's measurable?
- What sources of data are available?
- What elements are comparable across municipalities?
- How can indicators reflect local culture?
- How should municipalities be grouped or characterized (e.g., by population size, geographic characteristics, other)?
- Is per capita a useful frame of reference?

2:30 - 3:00   **Report back**:
- Recommendations on methodologies or frameworks for identifying/selecting cultural indicators at the local level
- Can "10 top things" be identified?

3:00 - 3:30   Break / Vote on favorite recommendations/topics

3:30 - 4:15   **Breakout session: Considerations of context / "indicators in use"**

Key discussion areas/issues:

Influences on selection choices; links to other areas
- Should municipal issues (such as accessibility or competitiveness) frame the choice of indicators?
- How can culture be related to topics such as income, innovation, technology, employment and other economic benefits, social changes, health, tourism?
- How can the indicators be used as benchmarking tools to advance cultural and community development? E.g., indicator places a value on something, leads to efforts to move it forward
- How might the indicators relate to provincial contexts for municipal performance measurements in many areas of work?
- How might local indicators roll up into provincial and national indicators?

Practical uses of indicators by local government (and others)
- How are indicators being used?
- In what contexts? For what purposes? (e.g. budget forecasting, cultural planning)
- Best practices?

The state of the research and/or political will
- What distance have we come in the past few years?
- What approaches have actually taken root?
- Best practices?

4:15 - 4:45   **Report back**:
- Key issues, trends, influences, and contexts
- Best practices in using indicators

4:45 - 5:00   Wrap-up

Appendix C. List of workshop participants

Orgn Type	Organization	Name
Federal	Canada Council for the Arts	Claire McCaughey
NGO	Canadian Conference of the Arts	James Missen
Federal	Canadian Heritage - Arts Policy	Marlene Chan
Federal	Canadian Heritage - Canadian Cultural Observatory	Francesco Manganiello
Federal	Canadian Heritage - Canadian Cultural Observatory	M. Sharon Jeannotte
Federal	Canadian Heritage - Cultural Affairs	Yanick Doirin
Federal	Canadian Heritage - International Relations	Marilyn Smith
Federal	Canadian Heritage - Policy and Communications (Vancouver)	Derick McNeil
Federal	Canadian Heritage - Policy Research Grp.	John Foote
Federal	Canadian Heritage - Policy Research Grp.	Mary Allen
Federal	Canadian Heritage - Portfolio Affairs	Sébastien Goupil
NGO	Canadian Sustainability Indicators Network	Carissa Wieler
	Cheney Research	Terry Cheney
Municipal	City of Ottawa	Caroline Obeid
Municipal	City of Ottawa	Gilles Séguin
Municipal	City of Ottawa	Janet Onyango
Municipal	City of Ottawa	Suzie Lanteigne
Municipal	City of Ottawa; Creative City Network Board of Directors	Debbie Hill
Municipal	City of Toronto	Harvey Low
Municipal	City of Windsor	Mary Baruth
Municipal	City of Windsor	Sonia Bajaj
NGO	Creative City Network of Canada - Centre of Expertise on Culture and Communities	Nancy Duxbury
NGO	Federation of Canadian Municipalities	Dallas Alderson
NGO	Federation of Canadian Municipalities	John Burrett
Municipal	Halifax Regional Municipality	Barbara Nehiley
Federal	Human Resources and Social Development Canada - Community Development and Partnerships Directorate	Amanda James
Federal	Human Resources and Social Development Canada - Community Development and Partnerships Directorate	Jasmin Mosielski
Federal	Infrastructure Canada	Hélène Picard
	MDF Strategies	Maria de Falco
NGO	Ottawa Community Foundation - Vital Signs	Georgette Houle
Provincial	Province of Ontario - Culture	Jennifer MacDonell
Provincial	QC Cultural Observatory	Benoit Allaire
Federal	Statistics Canada	Erika Dugas
Federal	Statistics Canada	Mary Cromie
Federal	Statistics Canada	Marla Waltman-Daschko
NGO	United Way - Action for Neighbourhood Change	Pat Steenberg
Academia	York University	Joyce Zemans

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